

AMERICAN EMBASSY'S NATIONAL DAILY PRESS REVIEW

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Today's Top Stories

1. December 11 parliamentary elections
2. Reactions following Laurent Gbagbo's transfer to the ICC

1. December 11 parliamentary elections

A front-page story in *Fraternite Matin* says that Sunday's parliamentary elections went peacefully; but that the turnout was low. "This vote is important for all Ivorians," President Alassane Ouattara is reported as saying. "The vote to elect MPs has never mobilized Ivorians," the newspaper quotes Youssouf Bakayoko, the president of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) as saying. The paper (p. 1) also carries a prominent headline saying that only the electoral commission is allowed to announce final electoral results. In a related development, another article in this paper (p. 3) quotes Paul Koffi Koffi, the Minister in charge of Defense, who notes that "security was ensured during the vote." With more on the atmosphere that prevailed during Sunday's elections, the paper (p. 7) quotes the head of the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Bert Koenders, who said: "The day was calm." Meanwhile, a commentary in the paper (p. 9) suggests that the big question regarding this election will be the turnout.

While a prominent headline in *Le Patriote* (p. 1) congratulates Ivorians for the Sunday's vote, *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 1) comments that President Ouattara is "entangled in the FPI's abstention trap." "Voter turnout in the 2000 elections was only 32.7 percent," the paper (p. 4) quotes President Ouattara as saying. The president also reportedly hoped that "the turnout would be higher this time; this could be an important pattern." A front-page headline in *Nord-Sud Quotidien* quotes the head of the electoral commission who described Sunday's vote as "positive," while President Ouattara called it "a transparent and inclusive vote."

A prominent headline in *Le Nouveau Reveil* (p. 1) says that the head of UNOCI has "certified the good organization of the vote." A day after Sunday's parliamentary elections, the paper (p. 3) comments that the former ruling FPI party, which boycotted the vote, has been "weakened." The paper (p. 4) quotes the youth leader of the FPI who described the vote as "a masquerade."

The boycott of the vote by the party of former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo is the major issue in *Soir Info* (p. 1) which carries a prominent headline reading, "The FPI has killed the elections." On the reasons behind the low turnout at the polling stations yesterday, the paper (p. 2) claims that supporters of Gbagbo followed the instructions given by the pro-Gbagbo CNRD which called for the boycott of the polls. The article also suggests that the massive displacement

of the population, killings and disappearance of people have resulted in the low turnout. *L'Inter* (p. 1) questions “the legitimacy” of Sunday’s vote. The paper (p. 7) quotes Laurent Akoun, a leading member of the FPI party, who commented that through the low turnout, “Ivoriens have expressed their support for Gbagbo.” “This is evidence that Gbagbo won the presidential elections,” the paper quotes Charles Ble Goude, a staunch supporter of the former president as saying.

A prominent headline in *Notre Voie* (p. 1) estimates the voter abstention rate at more than 80 percent and congratulates Ivoriens with a headline reading, “Bravo Ivoriens.” The paper (p. 2) sees Sunday’s vote as “a sanction of Ouattara” by Ivoriens and calls the vote “a victory for Gbagbo.” “The very low turnout, which was recognized by Ouattara, is a blow for him, his party, his French friends and his government,” comments the paper. “These are anti-democratic elections,” *Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 1) quotes the youth leader of the FPI, Justin Koua, as saying. “Gbagbo is the winner,” says another front-page headline in this paper which describes Sunday’s elections as “a serious setback for Ouattara.”

2. Reactions following Laurent Gbagbo’s transfer to the ICC

A front-page headline in *Notre Voie* (p. 1) says that pro-Gbagbo supporters organized a mammoth rally at The Hague over the weekend to protest the transfer of the former president to the ICC. The paper, which tries to weave in the “huge support” for Gbagbo at The Hague and the low turnout at the Sunday’s vote in Cote d’Ivoire, carries a banner headline reading, “Gbagbo wins twice.” “Thousands of democrats march to support,” says a prominent headline in *Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 1).

Media affiliation and circulation

Fraternite Matin	State-owned daily newspaper	23,000
L’Intelligent d’Abidjan	Privately-owned daily, leans pro-President Alassane Ouattara	7,000
L’Inter	Independent daily	20,000
Nord-Sud Quotidien	Daily close to Prime Minister Guillaume Soro	10,000
Notre Voie	Daily close to the FPI, the party of Former President Laurent Gbagbo	15,000
Le Nouveau Courrier	Daily close to the FPI, the party of Former President Laurent Gbagbo	10,000
Le Nouveau Reveil	Daily close to the PDCI-RDA, the party of Former President Henri Konan Bedie	17,000
Le Patriote	Daily close to the RDR, the party of President Alassane Ouattara	17,000
RTI TV	State broadcaster	
Soir Info	Independent daily	22,000

NOTE: Newspaper circulation figures represent the number of copies printed, not actual sales.